

repay his praises with a diamond of as pure
a water as his
verse. Jeanne de Chaudrier herself had been
left an orphan
and defrauded by a wicked uncle; had
eloped for two
months with Jacques de Fontbernier,
Seigneur de la
Riviere; had been wrested from him by
order of Lotus
XII and remarried to Guy des Roches; and
finally,
widowed of him, settled down as the wife of
Loys de
Ronsart and mother of his six children.

Pierre, the youngest, was born in 1524,
the year before
Pavia—a consolation to France, says de
Thou, for that
great overthrow. We are told that on the
way to his
christening his nurse let him fall, as if
prophetically,
among the meadow-flowers; and that a girl
with her
bearing a vessel of rose-water, in trying to
lift the little
Ronsard, spilt it all no less symbolically
upon his head.
Yet when he was destined like many a
younger son for
the Church and sent to the College of
Navarre, the future
scholar so kicked against masters and books
in his eager-
ness to be a soldier, that he was allowed to
go to Court
instead as page to the Dauphin Francois. At
the rime
(1536) Charles V was laying waste Provence;
and when,
six days later, the Dauphin of eighteen
suddenly sickened
and died, it was the universal cry that he had
been poisoned
by the Emperor. Ronsard never forgot how
as page of
twelve he had watched the autopsy of his
young master's
body:

Six jours (levant sa fin je vins a son service:

Mon malheur me permet qu'au lict mort je le
veisse,
Non comme un homme mort, mais comme un
endormy,
Ou comme un beau bouton qui se panche a
demy,
Languissant en Avril alors que la tempeste
Jalouse de son teint, luy aggrave la teste . . .
Je vy son corps ouvrir . . .

He may have seen too in that October the
suspected
poisoner, Count Montecuculli of Ferrara,
torn asunder